

Fisheries Service Weekly Report October 4, 2012

DIVISION UPDATES

Inland Fisheries Division

Trout Surveys - The Garrett College Fisheries Management class assisted staff in surveying Hoyes Run (tributary to the Youghiogheny River). A stream restoration project in the headwaters of the stream was completed last fall, reducing the sediment load into the stream system. The project appears to be paying off as we documented good year-classes of brook trout, brown trout, and rainbow trout for the first time in many years. Fork Run, a tributary to Hoyes Run, was also sampled. The watershed is fully forested and a viable brook trout population with a strong 2012 year class was documented.

Conducted electrofishing surveys in the Gunpowder Falls at the dam/Falls, Masemore Road and Blue Mount stations. MBSS, Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability, Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Division, Montgomery County and Trout Unlimited assisted with the surveys.

Washington Council of Governments assisted staff in conducting an electrofishing survey within the Northwest Branch below University Boulevard (Prince Georges County) to establish preliminary fish species data. This section of Northwest Branch is scheduled for stream restoration. Approximately 25 fish species including smallmouth bass were collected during the survey.

Black Bass - Tidal black bass surveys of Marshyhope Creek were completed. Sampling resulted in good numbers of young-of-year (YOY), juveniles and adult largemouth bass. Current fishing should be good, and it should continue as the smaller bass recruit to the fishery. Highest numbers of bass were collected in upstream areas near Federalsburg, and the largest bass encountered was approximately 4 pounds. Downstream areas held fewer bass, but those collected were of quality size. Blue catfish from 12"- 26" were encountered and most frequently seen near the Eldorado Bridge. Perhaps most interesting was the presence of other species that are uncommon to the survey. Small (12-15") red drum were quite abundant in the lower sections of Marshyhope Creek, as were small summer flounder and YOY spotted sea trout. Although fishermen have reported northern snakeheads from the watershed, none were encountered during the 2012 survey.

Collected length, weight, and catch rate data during an open bass tournament on Deep Creek Lake. Eighteen teams with a five-fish limit checked in 29 largemouth bass and 46 smallmouth bass for a catch rate of 4.2 bass per boat. Largemouth bass measured from 13 inches to 18.7 inches, while smallmouth bass ranged from 13 inches to 16.7 inches.



Habitat and Water Quality - Provided comments to the Environmental Review Unit regarding time of year restriction waivers for three Casselman River tributaries. Fisheries Service has been working with MDE Abandoned Mine Lands Division to improve water quality in acid mine drainage (AMD) streams within the watershed to improve brook trout populations. These AMD projects are now underway and we would like to see them constructed as soon as possible. These locations currently have poor water quality and we recommended that the waivers be granted in order to expedite these projects.

Fisheries and Resource Assessment Service met with Frederick City officials to discuss vegetation problems in Carroll Creek. The portion of the creek that runs through downtown Frederick is an artificial channel. It was created as an above ground portion of the Carroll Creek Flood Control Project. The channel has minimal slope, so water flow is sluggish and sediments and debris readily accumulate on the bottom. Since the project was completed in the mid-1990s, a lot of sediments and nutrients have been deposited in the stream causing summer algae and SAV growth. City officials contacted DNR to inquire about the use of grass carp or exotic snails or clams to remove the excess vegetation. In the interim, a member of the Frederick community has been planting lily pads in the creek in hope of taking up some of the excess nutrients. Staff toured the creek, discussed options with Frederick Officials and advised them that grass carp and the snails are prohibited under Nonnative Aquatic Organisms regulations (COMAR 08.02.19.04). The city is investigating an alternative – underwater, ultrasonic algal control units for the creek channel. Fisheries staff suggested that the city drain the channel during the winter to kill the SAV and to allow them to clean out as much debris as possible since the sonic units need to be used in conjunction with nutrient reduction.

Fish Stocking – Tiger musky fingerlings (averaging 7 inches) obtained from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission were stocked into the North Branch Potomac River from Black Oak to Cumberland, Broadford Lake, Piney Reservoir, New Germany Lake, and Pleasant Valley Lake. These fish are part of the management plan for these water bodies; specifically the tiger muskies will prey upon the numerous panfish species, thereby increasing growth rates of the panfish. This will not only increase angler interest in the trophy tiger musky fishery, but also increase angler interest in panfish of larger size.



Tiger musky fingerling in Piney Reservoir, 2012.

The Youghiogheny River Catch and Release Trout Fishing Area received 5,450 brown trout fingerlings through a cooperative effort with the Youghiogheny Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Wisp Resort, and Brookfield Power Company. Staff float-stocked these donated trout throughout the C&R Area to support put-and grow management.

Outreach - Attended the Youghiogheny River Watershed Association meeting where outreach activities, water quality monitoring, and environmental restoration projects for 2013 were discussed.

The Invasive Species Matrix Team (ISMT) met with members of the Education Matrix Team (EMT) to work on developing a toolkit for educators to use to teach students about invasive species. The ISMT will propose a list of aquatic invasive species to the EMT that will fit into one of five concept areas: historical concept on invasive species; how invasive species are introduced and spread; their impacts on natural areas; their impacts on students' lives; and, student and community actions that can be taken to address these species. Once the species are selected, ISMT will prepare a short description of the invader, complete with possible resources or ideas to teach about the species. This toolkit will educate students and educators on the problem with invasive species and will correlate with Maryland Environmental Literacy standards and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) goals.

Hatcheries Division

Coldwater hatcheries –Albert Powell Hatchery conducted a tour for an Allegany College class as part of the school's natural resources curriculum.

Approximately 4,000 brown trout juveniles were stocked from the Cushwa culture station into the Youghiogheny River catch & release management area to benefit recreational anglers. Two circular tanks were installed at the Cushwa facility this week to increase brown trout production potential.

Fall trout stocking began with loads transported to Owens Creek, Friends Creek and Carroll Creek. Stocking will continue for the next few weeks.

Manning Hatchery – Began to harvest ponds for largemouth bass, golden shiner and hybrid sunfish. These fish will be used to address a variety of management needs, including stock enhancement, corrective stocking and children's fishing rodeos.

Transferred captive Atlantic sturgeon brood stock from the Manning Hatchery recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) to the large culture tank at the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory. In light of the recent listing that designated Atlantic sturgeon as federally endangered, captive brood stock development is currently suspended. The Manning Hatchery RAS can be repurposed to meet more pressing fish culture needs.

Piney Point Aquaculture Center (PPAC) –Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) inmate crews are still hard at work constructing shell bags to support the Maryland aquaculture industry. The shell bag stockpile now stands at 17,050 bags, but the project is behind schedule due to shell and bag material shortages. Staff hope to make up some ground with regular shell deliveries and mild fall weather.

DPSCS is working with PPAC to conduct repair work on the Hatcheries Division's 48' flatbed trailer. An inmate crew with mechanical experience will be brought to PPAC to deconstruct the

rotten trailer bed floor prior to replacement with new materials. This will result in considerable cost savings for the overall repair.

Fisheries Marketing Division

Chef Education Trips – Took two chef education trips to Hooper’s Island. We had a total of 24 chefs and media join us. The team learned about pound nets, trotliners, crab potters, crab processing facilities, oyster dredging, and oyster aquaculture.

Eat Local Challenge – Spoke at the Bon Appétit management company’s Eat Local Challenge. This year the focus was on local seafood. We spoke to a crowd of nearly 400 about the advantages of purchasing local seafood and how that seafood gets to their plates. Many that attended the event had no idea how many of the commercial fisheries worked or even how they are managed.

‘Baltimore Bill’ - Playing off of the Punxsutawney Phil event that is held in Pennsylvania each year, Old Bay has started the ‘Baltimore Bill’ weather-predicting crab press conference. Staff participated in the development of this event and attended to release the crab into the bay. The press was on hand and clips of the event played on over 50 news stations. The media team at Old Bay estimates that this was seen by over 1.1 million people.

National Coalition of Seafood Processors – Met with the National Coalition of Seafood Processors to discuss what we can do in their efforts to save seafood jobs in the region. The meeting was mostly informative with no specific ‘asks’ made.

Communications and Outreach Division

News –

Fall Trout Stocking to Begin in October

http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=272

NRP Continues to Step Up Enforcement to Stop Illegal Fishing

http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=271

New Material –

The Shellfish Monitoring and Assessment Program now has a presence online at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/oysters/monitor/home.asp>. The link to the program is located under the Shellfish Program and consists of 15MB of material. A highlight of the site includes the annual Fall Survey of Maryland oyster bars.

Updates were made to web pages for commercial late and violations reports; striped bass harvest charts; trout stocking; FHEP Program; and Fishing Challenge.

Fishing Reports - September 26 report highlighted Maryland Fishing Challenge Finale at Sandy Point State Park. Sponsors and winners were listed.

<http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/fishingreport/index.asp?d=09122012>

Angler’s Log - 19 Angler’s Log submissions were reviewed and posted.

Fishing Challenge Online Award Entries - The 2012/2013 Challenge began Sep 4, 2012. A total of 41 entries have been submitted to date.

Social Media -

Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/MDDNRFisheriesService>) Our page has 555 fans, representing a potential reach of about 167,000 people. Posts connecting to the DNR Fishing Report, trout stocking and a press release concerning illegal recreational fishing and the recovery of an abandoned gill net gained the most attention.

Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/mddnrfish>) - @MDDNRFISH is now being followed by 1452 Twitter accounts. Seven tweets broadcasted this week.

Constant Contact – 409 subscribers have signed up to receive e-mail messages. Emails sent this week included: ‘Maryland DNR will be Temporarily Close Lapidum Boat Ramp’ was sent to Tidal and Non-Tidal Recreational Fisheries subscribers; and ‘Commercial Crabber Reminder’ was sent to Commercial Fisheries subscribers.

Customer Service - Topics and inquiries included fall trout stocking; species identification; recreational regulations; requests to volunteer/internship; where to fish; snakehead; complaints on killing of oyster toadfish at fishing pier; garbage; undersized fish being kept; silver perch questions, circle and barbless hook research; fish kill observed in Piscataway; Lower Savage River turbidity issue; oyster season; commercial crabbing regulation clarification.

Web Analytics - Page views of Fisheries web site by date are shown below. Specific page information is available upon request.

Date	Page Views
9/24/2012	9,817
9/25/2012	9,344
9/26/2012	11,208
9/27/2012	10,553
9/28/2012	11,129
9/29/2012	8,107
9/30/2012	7,291
	67,449

Artificial Reef Updates –

Hail Cove reef project - Start date for the project (along Eastern Neck in the lower Chester River), in partnership with US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is pushed back until spring 2013. USFWS and DNR are unwilling to accept liability and sign a Vulcan Marine Insurance Agreement on a 300 foot long barge. USFWS is investigating hiring Langenfelder Marine to pick up the rock at Vulcan quarry in Havre De Grace, and transport to the proposed mooring area off Hail Cove, with no liability to DNR. The downside is that the price of transport may go up, which could limit the amount of reef material purchased.

MD Artificial Reef Initiative (MARI) planning meeting - Met with MARI partners and Artificial Reef Committee (ARC) members on September 25 to discuss plans and funding issues for remainder of 2012 and 2013. Highlights were as follows:

- Propose up to 4 ARC funded dives to one large reef ball site and 3 Wilson artificial reef sites: Cook's Point, Gooses, Point No Point, and Tangier Sound.
- Look at two location options in the lower bay for a demo reef engineered of a base of granite and cap of limestone, or using large granite armor rocks: Lower Mainstem Bay Sanctuary/Middle Grounds and Taylor's Island Fish Haven with a possible polygon expansion of TI Fish Haven. Any expansion would have to go through Corps/USCG review. Staff is working with MGS and the Shellfish Division to determine site locations on the "Middle Grounds" within lower Mainstem Bay Sanctuary.
- Pursue substrate commodity purchase discussions with marine contractors. These discussions will include Mike Baker, since he was a valuable consultant on the Woodrow Wilson project. MARI treasurer will discuss a potential Bond Bill for the 2013 GA Session with MD Legislative Sportsmen's Foundation and potential incentives. Board of Public Works will look into potential mitigation with the Sparrows Point Coke facility and will look into the amount of money in the MDE account.

Legislation, Regulation, FMP, Fish Passage and Habitat Protection

Fishery Management Plans (FMP) -

Participated in the Sustainable Fisheries Global Implementation Team (GIT) conference call. Members of the committee discussed the updated GIT work plan. Representatives from Virginia felt there should be a higher priority on identifying tributaries that meet the oyster metrics for restored areas. Land-use decisions and their impacts on aquatic habitats and organisms continue to be a high priority. There will be more effort placed on selecting areas that foster cross-GIT interaction and integration. Staff will follow up with current members who have not attended previous full GIT meetings to see if they are still interested in participating or whether they would like to nominate someone in their place. Staff will also be developing a more detailed draft agenda for the December meeting to be held at Port Isabel.

Participated in the National Climate Change & Wildlife Science Center (NCCWSC) Climate Change Science and Management Webinar Series, specifically, effects of sea-level rise and extreme events on coastal habitats and their wildlife. Projected climate change effects from modeling efforts include sea-level rise, increased storm magnitude and frequency, salt water intrusion, accelerated erosion, shifting mud flat profiles, and increased water temperature and acidity. Projected climate change effects points to the need to document baseline conditions and to link habitat responses to species impacts using vulnerability assessments.

Met with Atlantic Coastal Program to review the Comprehensive Coastal Management Plan (CCMP). Every year the CCMP implementation table is updated; however this year a more in-depth review is underway. Staff will be reviewing the current strategies and actions for finfish,

shellfish and blue crabs and recommending appropriate changes. New items to be considered include a spatial planning approach and aquaculture activities.

Provided comments on the Middle Patuxent Vulnerability Assessment and consolidated comments from species specialists (yellow perch, blue crabs, herring and oysters).

Continued to make changes to the Coastal Bays hard clam update and research material for a draft Chesapeake Bay Shellfish FMP. Staff is finishing up edits on the 22 FMP species updates. Staff is providing comments on the Wildlife & Heritage Service Captive Terrapin Guidelines currently in preparation.

Completed a mailing to bait & tackle shops re: crab pot Bycatch Reduction Devices and sent cases of fishing guides to three license agents.

Fish Passage - Met with representatives from Maryland Biological Stream Survey, American Rivers and NOAA to review the biological and physical monitoring from the Simkins Dam removal project. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to link the physical changes in the river bed with site-specific fish and benthic results. Based on the physical monitoring results, Bloede Dam is concentrating the sediment impacts and inhibiting recovery of the system.

The Chesapeake Bay Program's Fish Passage Workgroup released their "Chesapeake Bay Fish Passage Prioritization Tool" to natural resource agencies. The GIS based tool developed by The Nature Conservancy with funding assistance from NOAA was created by Fish Passage Coordinators from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and DC with help from local experts. View the tool at http://maps.tnc.org/EROF_ChesapeakeFPP/.

Filmed local Maryland chefs as they toured the Chesapeake Bay learning first-hand how Maryland seafood is harvested from the Bay. Chefs saw how an oyster dredge works, learned about pound nets, trolled for bluefish, and visited an oyster farm on Hooper's Island. Video clips will be created for the newly launched Seafood Marketing web page.

Fisheries Habitat and Ecosystem

Work continues on developing data collection processes for striped bass stomachs collected during health monitoring by the Fish Health Program at Oxford Lab. Stomachs have been processed to separate empty stomachs from those containing food.

Entered the Scientific Collection Permit (SCP) data off the "hard copy" returns for 2007.

Staff is continuing to enter data from previous sampling years, including 2012 spring and summer data.

Attended the 2012 Chesapeake Watershed Forum, sponsored by the Alliance for Chesapeake Bay. Staff hosted and participated in a session titled "Conserving Key Fish Habitat in Maryland," which included presentations describing the science behind impervious stressors to fish habitat and how the science is being applied to guide policy. As part of this effort, staff is summarizing

planning recommendations that support habitat conservation, from the Mattawoman Ecosystem Based Management Plan.

Met with staff from Office of Sustainable Futures, to discuss potential next steps in communicating conservation priorities to the public and policy setters.

Assisted in coordinating comments on a middle Patuxent River restoration plan that addresses climate change impacts. NOAA Restoration Center is sponsoring this work, to help produce guidance in evaluating vulnerability of restoration projects to future impacts of climate change. Species of interest for this particular project include yellow perch, river herring and blue crab. Oyster habitat is being evaluated as well.

Staff will attend the Watershed Resources Registry Technical Action Committee workshop on October 10.

Staff will present results of the impervious cover work and its application at the Maryland Water Monitoring Council Meeting in December.

Staff has completed 2012 summer sampling of the estuarine fish community in Wicomico River (Potomac), Gunpowder River, Middle River, Tred Avon River, Mattawoman Creek, Piscataway Creek, Harris Creek, and Broad Creek (Eastern Shore).

Regulations

The following regulation packages are circulating for approval:

Final Action – Adopted as Proposed – Electronic circulation – Summer Flounder

Final Action – Adopted as Proposed – Electronic circulation – Black Bass Tournaments

The following regulation packages are under preparation:

Penalties (annual adjustments), Restitution (system for egregious fishing violations), Blue Crabbing Charters/Education Permits (consolidate into one regulation), Billfish (add roundscale spearfish)

The following regulation packages became effective:

- Horseshoe Crabs — 08.02.10.01 — Effective 10/1/12
Recreational and Commercial Fishery Changes.
- Oysters — Power Dredge Permit and Lines; Hand Tong Lines — 08.02.04.09,.12 —
Effective 10/1/12
Remove permit requirement; fix lines.
- Oysters — PSFA — 08.02.04.17 — Effective 10/1/12
Fix lines.

The following regulation packages have been proposed and are following the APA process:

View proposals in Maryland Register at

<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/MDRegister/mdregister.aspx>

- Summer Flounder — Proposed — 08.02.05.12
Maryland Register 8/24/12, Comment Period Ends 9/24/12, Scheduled Effective 10/29/12 Standardize the declaration period, standardize ownership of a federally permitted vessel, clarify the limit of 2 quotas fished from the same vessel, clarify how overages will be deducted, clarify why public notices are issued, cap the permits at 7 (current number) and allow for transfer of 100% of individual's quota, but with cap on amount of quota any one individual may acquire.
- Black Bass Tournament Permit — Proposed — 08.02.01.11
Maryland Register 8/24/12, Comment Period Ends 9/24/12, Scheduled Effective 10/29/12
Require largemouth and smallmouth bass tournament directors to obtain a free permit before conducting bass tournaments in Maryland.
- Black Sea Bass — Proposed — 08.02.05.21
Maryland Register 9/7/12, Comment Period Ends 10/9/12, Scheduled Effective 11/12/12 Standardize the declaration period, standardize text regarding ownership of a federally permitted vessel, clarify the limit of 2 quotas fished from the same vessel, clarify how overages will be deducted, clarify why public notices are issued, cap the permits at 14 (current number) and allow for transfer of 100% of individual's quota, but with cap on amount of quota any one individual may acquire.
- Nontidal — Proposed — 08.02.11.01, .03
Maryland Register 10/19/12, Comment Period Ends 11/19/12, Scheduled Effective 12/24/12
Allows for night fishing in impoundments larger than 5 acres that are stocked with trout. Places Lion's Park Pond in Allegany County and Avalon Pond (Lost Lake) in Baltimore County on the Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas list which will allow anglers of all ages to access the areas for fishing. Makes several clarifications to the put and take trout fishing areas. Changes the Governor's Bridge Natural Area Pond from a catch and return area to a limited harvest area.
- Shellfish — General — Lobster — Proposed — 08.02.08.10
Maryland Register 10/19/12, Comment Period Ends 11/19/12, Scheduled Effective 12/24/12
ASMFC requires mandatory v-notching of all female lobsters, immediate release of egg-bearing female lobsters, and a season closure to the landing of lobsters from February 1 through March 31. During the February 1-March 31 closure, lobster potters will have a two week period to remove lobster pots from the water and may set lobster pots one week prior to the end of the closed season.
- Yellow Perch — Proposed — 08.02.21.04
Maryland Register 10/19/12, Comment Period Ends 11/19/12, Scheduled Effective 12/24/12
Open, close or modify a commercial season by putting notice on the reporting phone system and Fisheries Services' website rather than the newspaper.

The following are current emergency actions in effect:

- Fishing in Nontidal Waters — Emergency — 08.02.11.01
Effective June 26 through December 20, 2012
Remove Lion's Park Pond in Allegany County and Avalon Pond (Lost Lake) in Baltimore County from the list of areas limited to individuals under 16 years of age, 65 years of age and older, and Blind Persons. Both areas will be placed on the Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas.
- Aquaculture — Emergency — 08.02.23.02-.04
Effective September 13, 2012 through January 15, 2013
Smaller size limit for aquaculture during closed wild fishery, fees and rent for water column leases; seed oyster size.